This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

The Status of the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) An Internet Protocol (IP) phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol, ~~said~~ the IP phone located behind a firewall, ~~said~~ the IP phone comprising:

[[~~a.~~]] a Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) client ~~software~~ to, upon an initial power up of ~~said~~ the IP phone, ~~communicating~~ communicate with ~~said~~ the firewall to receive an IP address;

[[~~b.~~]] an IP agent ~~software~~ to, upon receiving ~~said~~ the IP address from ~~said~~ the firewall, ~~registering~~ register with a domain name system (DNS) switch based upon at least the following parameters: ~~said~~ the assigned phone number, ~~said~~ the received IP address, a public IP address associated with ~~said~~ the firewall, and a medium access control (MAC) address associated with ~~said~~ the IP phone; and

wherein, upon successful registration with ~~said~~ the DNS switch, ~~said~~ the IP agent ~~software receives~~ is to receive a port number and address over which future communications are to be performed, and the IP agent is to monitor for changes to the public IP address associated with the firewall after the IP phone is registered with the DNS switch and, upon detecting a change to the public IP address associated with the firewall, the IP agent is to identify a new public IP address associated with the firewall and reregister with the DNS switch without reinitializing the IP phone based upon at least the following parameters: the assigned phone number, the received IP address, the identified new public IP address associated with the firewall, and the MAC address associated with the IP phone.

2. (Currently Amended) An IP phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol, as per claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the port number accepts communication requests via any of the following protocols: Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) or Media Gateway Control Protocol (MGCP).

3. (Currently Amended) An IP phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol, as per claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the IP phone is additionally associated with a backup phone number, wherein ~~whereby~~ communications are forwarded to ~~said~~ the backup phone number upon any ~~disruptions~~ disruption in communication with ~~said~~ the IP phone.

4. (Currently Amended) An IP phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol, as per claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the firewall runs **[[~~an~~]]** a Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) service and ~~said~~ the public IP address associated with ~~said~~ the firewall is obtained via **[[~~a~~]]** an HTTP GET query.

5. (Currently Amended) An IP phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol, as per claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the communications between said IP agent and ~~said~~ the DNS switch is via the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP)/IP protocol.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) An IP phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol, as per ~~claim 6~~ claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the IP agent ~~monitors~~ is to monitor changes to ~~said~~ the public IP address associated with ~~said~~ the firewall at pre-set time intervals.

8. (Currently Amended) An IP phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol, as per claim 1, wherein ~~said~~ the DNS switch is behind an Internet Service Provider (ISP) gateway.

9. (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating a communication link between one or more Internet Protocol (IP) phones located behind a first firewall and one or more IP phones behind a second firewall via a domain name system (DNS) switch, ~~said~~ the method as implemented in ~~said~~ the DNS switch comprising ~~the steps of~~:

[[~~a.~~]] receiving a request for [[~~an~~]] a unique IP address from each of a first IP phone located behind ~~said~~ the first firewall and a second IP phone located behind ~~said~~ the second firewall;

[[~~b.~~]] transmitting a respective unique IP address [[~~for~~]] to ~~said~~ each of the first and second IP phones;

[[~~c.~~]] receiving a request for registration from ~~said~~ each of the first and second IP phones, each of ~~said~~ the requests based upon at least the following parameters: a unique assigned phone number, a unique IP address, a public IP address associated with a corresponding firewall, and a unique ~~MAC address,~~ medium access control (MAC) address;

[[~~d.~~]] registering ~~said~~ the first and second IP phones based upon ~~said~~ the received parameters associated with each IP phone, and upon successful registration, transmitting a respective port number and respective address to ~~said~~ the first and second IP phones over which future communications are to be ~~performed, and~~ performed; and

wherein [[~~a~~]] the communication link is facilitated at ~~said~~ the DNS switch between ~~said~~ the first IP phone and second IP phone via ~~said~~ the transmitted port ~~number and address~~ numbers and addresses, the first IP phone is to monitor for changes in a public IP address associated with the first firewall after the first IP phone is registered and, upon detecting a new public IP address associated with the first firewall, the first IP phone is to reregister without reinitializing the first IP phone based upon at least the following parameters: a first assigned phone number associated

with the first IP phone, a first received IP address associated with the first IP phone, the detected new public IP address associated with the first firewall, and a first MAC address associated with the first IP phone.

10. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for facilitating a communication link between one or more IP phones located behind a first firewall and one or more IP phones behind a second firewall via a DNS switch,~~ as per claim 9, wherein ~~said port number~~ each of the numbers accepts communication requests via any of the following protocols: Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) or Media Gateway Control Protocol (MGCP).

11. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for facilitating a communication link between one or more IP phones located behind a first firewall and one or more IP phones behind a second firewall via a DNS switch,~~ as per claim 9, wherein each of ~~said~~ the IP phones **[[**~~are~~**]]** is associated with a backup phone number and ~~said~~ wherein the method additionally comprises ~~the step of~~ identifying ~~disruptions~~ a disruption in communication with either of ~~said~~ the IP phones and forwarding communications addressed to a corresponding backup phone number.

12. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for facilitating a communication link between one or more IP phones located behind a first firewall and one or more IP phones behind a second firewall via a DNS switch,~~ as per claim 9, wherein each of ~~said~~ the firewalls ~~run an~~ runs a Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) service and ~~said~~ the public IP address associated with each firewall is obtained via a HTTP GET query.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for facilitating a communication link between one or more IP phones located behind a first firewall and one or more IP phones behind a second firewall via a DNS switch, as per claim 13~~ as per claim 9, wherein changes in ~~said~~ the public IP address associated with ~~firewalls~~ the first firewall are monitored at pre-set time intervals.

15. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for facilitating a communication link between one or more IP phones located behind a first firewall and one or more IP phones behind a second firewall via a DNS switch,~~ as per claim 9, wherein ~~said~~ the DNS switch is behind an Internet Service Provider (ISP) gateway.

16. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising a ~~computer user~~ tangible medium having computer readable code embodied therein which, when executed, facilitates communication between an Internet Protocol (IP) phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol and a domain name system (DNS) switch, ~~said~~ the IP phone located behind a firewall, ~~said medium comprising~~ wherein, when executed, the computer readable code causes a machine to:

~~a. computer readable program code communicating~~ communicate with ~~said~~ the firewall to receive an IP address,

~~b. computer readable program code,~~ upon receiving ~~said~~ the IP address from ~~said~~ the firewall, ~~registering~~ register with **[[~~a~~]]** the DNS switch based upon at least the following parameters: ~~said~~ the assigned phone number, ~~said~~ the received IP address, a public IP address associated with ~~said~~ the firewall, and a MAC address associated with ~~said~~ the IP phone, **[[~~and~~]]**

~~c. computer readable program code,~~ upon successful registration with ~~said~~ the DNS switch, ~~receiving~~ receive a port number and address over which future communications are to be performed,

monitor for changes to the public IP address associated with the firewall after successful registration of the IP phone with the DNS switch, and

upon detecting a new public IP address of the firewall, reregister with the DNS switch without reinitializing the IP phone based upon at least the following parameters: the assigned phone number, the received IP address, the identified new public IP address associated with the firewall, and the MAC address associated with the IP phone.

17. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture ~~comprising a computer user medium having computer readable code embodied therein which facilitates communication between an IP phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol and a DNS switch,~~ as per claim 16, wherein ~~said medium further comprises~~ the computer readable ~~program~~ code, when executed, further causes the machine to forward ~~forwarding~~ communications to a backup phone number upon identifying any ~~disruptions~~ disruption in communication with ~~said~~ the IP phone.

18. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture ~~comprising a computer user medium having computer readable code embodied therein which facilitates communication between an IP phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol and a DNS switch,~~ as per claim 16, wherein ~~said~~ the firewall runs **[[**~~an~~**]]** a Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) service and ~~said~~ the public IP address associated with ~~said~~ the firewall is obtained via a computer readable ~~program~~ code generated HTTP GET query.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture ~~comprising a computer user medium having computer readable code embodied therein which facilitates communication between an IP phone with an assigned phone number capable of communicating over a packet-based communication protocol and a DNS switch, as per claim 19~~ as per claim 16, wherein ~~said medium further comprises a timer for monitoring~~ the computer readable code, when executed, further causes the machine to monitor for changes to ~~said~~ the public IP address associated with ~~said~~ the firewall at pre-set time intervals.